IN THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all pending claims of the Application are reproduced below.

1. (Original) An apparatus, comprising:

a loadbalancer operable to receive a packet included within a request that is associated with an end user, the loadbalancer being operable to communicate the packet to a selected one of a plurality of gateways, the loadbalancer being operable to build an object that correlates an internet protocol (IP) address associated with the end user to the selected gateway such that the object may be used to direct subsequently received packets associated with the end user to the selected gateway, the subsequently received packets being directed by the loadbalancer based on end user IP address information included in the subsequently received packets.

2. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein an additional loadbalancer may receive the packet and build an additional object that correlates the IP address associated with the end user to the selected gateway such that the additional object may be used to direct subsequently received additional packets associated with the end user to the selected gateway, the subsequently received additional packets being directed by the additional loadbalancer based on destination information included in the subsequently received additional packets.

3. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the loadbalancers evaluate communication flows in one direction in order to direct the flows to the selected gateway based on a selected one of source and destination information.

4. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the gateway is a selected one of a group of elements consisting of:

a firewall;

a switch;

an intrusion detection element;

gateway general packet radio service (GPRS) support node (GGSN);

a client service packet gateway (CSPG);

a packet data serving node (PDSN);

and

a Layer-two tunneling protocol network server (LNS).

5. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the loadbalancer includes a table operable to store the object that correlates the IP address of the end user to the selected gateway.

6. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the gateway performs per-host operations based on an identity associated with the end user.

7. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the loadbalancer includes one or more algorithms that may be used in order to determine which of the plurality of gateways is to receive the packet.

8. (Original) A method for tracking information in a loadbalancing environment, comprising:

receiving a packet included within a request that is associated with an end user;

communicating the packet to a selected one of a plurality of gateways;

building an object that correlates an internet protocol (IP) address associated with the end user to the selected gateway such that the object may be used to direct subsequently received packets associated with the end user to the selected gateway; and

directing the subsequently received packets based on source information included in the subsequently received packets.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising:

building an additional object that correlates the IP address associated with the end user to the selected gateway such that the additional object may be used to direct subsequently received additional packets associated with the end user to the selected gateway; and

directing the subsequently received additional packets based on destination information included in the subsequently received additional packets.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 9, further comprising:

evaluating communication flows in one direction in order to direct the flows to the selected gateway based on a selected one of the source and destination information.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising:

storing the object that correlates the IP address of the end user to the selected gateway in a table.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising:

executing one or more algorithms in order to determine which of the plurality of gateways is to receive the packet.

13. (Original) A system for tracking information in a loadbalancing environment, comprising:

means for receiving a packet included within a request that is associated with an end user;

means for communicating the packet to a selected one of a plurality of gateways;

means for building an object that correlates an internet protocol (IP) address associated with the end user to the selected gateway such that the object may be used to direct subsequently received packets associated with the end user to the selected gateway; and

means for directing the subsequently received packets based on source information included in the subsequently received packets.

14. (Original) The system of Claim 13, further comprising:

means for building an additional object that correlates the IP address associated with the end user to the selected gateway such that the additional object may be used to direct subsequently received additional packets associated with the end user to the selected gateway; and

means for directing the subsequently received additional packets based on destination information included in the subsequently received additional packets.

15. (Original) The system of Claim 14, further comprising:

means for evaluating communication flows in one direction in order to direct the flows to the selected gateway based on a selected one of the source and destination information.

16. (Original) The system of Claim 13, further comprising:

means for storing the object that correlates the IP address of the end user to the selected gateway.

17. (Original) The system of Claim 13, further comprising:

means for executing one or more algorithms in order to determine which of the plurality of gateways is to receive the packet.

18. (Original) Software for tracking information in a loadbalancing environment, the software being embodied in a computer readable medium and including computer code such that when executed is operable to:

receive a packet included within a request that is associated with an end user;

communicate the packet to a selected one of a plurality of gateways;

build an object that correlates an internet protocol (IP) address associated with the end user to the selected gateway such that the object may be used to direct subsequently received packets associated with the end user to the selected gateway; and

direct the subsequently received packets based on source information included in the subsequently received packets.

19. (Original) The medium of Claim 18, wherein the code is further operable to:

build an additional object that correlates the IP address associated with the end user to the selected gateway such that the additional object may be used to direct subsequently received additional packets associated with the end user to the selected gateway; and

direct the subsequently received additional packets based on destination information included in the subsequently received additional packets.

20. (Original) The medium of Claim 19, wherein the code is further operable to:

evaluate communication flows in one direction in order to direct the flows to the selected gateway based on a selected one of the source and destination information.

21. (Original) The medium of Claim 18, wherein the code is further operable to:

store the object that correlates the IP address of the end user to the selected gateway.

22. (Original) The medium of Claim 18, wherein the code is further operable to:

execute one or more algorithms in order to determine which of the plurality of gateways is to receive the packet.